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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
QUESTION OF PALESTINE

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-eighth year

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/64 D of 11 December 1992 on the question of Palestine. The operative part of the resolution reads as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"...

"1. Reaffirms the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine;

"2. Welcomes the ongoing peace process, which started at Madrid, and expresses the hope that it will lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region;

"3. Expresses the need for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process;

"4. Considers that the convening, at a certain stage, of an International Peace Conference in the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination, would contribute to the promotion of peace in the region;

"5. Reaffirms the following principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace:

"(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories;

"(b) Guaranteeing arrangements for peace and security of all States in the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries;

"(c) Resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions;

"(d) Dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967;

"(e) Guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites;

"6. Notes the expressed desire and endeavours to place the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, under the supervision of the United Nations for a transitional period or, alternatively, to provide international protection for the Palestinian people there, as part of the peace process;

"7. Requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter."

2. On 15 September 1993, the Secretary-General, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 7 of resolution 47/64 D, addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

"I have the honour to refer to resolution 47/64 D, which the General Assembly adopted on 11 December 1992, at its forty-seventh session, under the agenda item 'Question of Palestine', the text of which is attached.

"Paragraph 7 of the resolution requests me to continue my efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region, and to submit progress reports on development in this matter. I should be grateful if the Security Council would convey to me its views no later than 15 October 1993."

3. As at 1 November 1993, no reply had been received from the Security Council.

4. In a note verbale dated 14 September 1993 to the parties concerned, the Secretary-General sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, and of the Palestine Liberation Organization, with regard to any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 1 November 1993, the following replies had been received:

Note verbale dated 12 October 1993 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

"The Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to refer to the Secretary-General's note of 14 September 1993 concerning resolution 47/64 D, adopted by the General Assembly on 11 December 1992.

"Israel has long advocated direct negotiations as the only framework to advance peace in the Middle East. The negotiations presently taking place in the framework of the Madrid peace process and the recent achievements with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian and the Israeli-Jordanian talks vindicate this approach. Resolution 47/64 D, on the other hand, runs counter to this principle of direct negotiations. This resolution, while referring to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), also offers, in paragraph 5, a series of principles that prejudge and even predetermine the outcome of the negotiations. This is contrary to any notion of genuine negotiations.

"This resolution is outdated and out of touch with reality. For these reasons, Israel continues to oppose it and believes that it should not be adopted again at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly."

Note verbale dated 21 October 1993 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

"The Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to refer to the note verbale, dated 14 September 1993, regarding General Assembly resolution 47/64 D, and seeks to convey the position of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, which retains the powers and responsibilities of the Provisional Government of Palestine, on this matter.

"In paragraph 2 of resolution 47/64 D, the General Assembly 'welcomes the ongoing peace process, which started at Madrid, and expresses the hope that it will lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region'.

"The most significant development emanating from that peace process has been the recent signing at Washington, D.C., on 13 September 1993, of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, including its Annexes and Agreed Minutes, by the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Government of the State of Israel and by the United States of America and the Russian Federation, as the co-sponsors of the peace process [A/48/486-S/26560, annex]. That agreement and the mutual recognition by the two sides constitute a very important and positive development and step towards the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

"According to the agreement, negotiations on the final settlement, which include several crucial elements, have been postponed and will commence as soon as possible, but not later than the beginning of the third year of the interim period. The most crucial elements to be negotiated include the final status of Jerusalem, the illegal settlements, the rights of the Palestinian refugees and borders. A necessity for the smooth proceeding of the process is the achievement of similar progress on other tracks of the peace process between the concerned Arab States and Israel.

"Paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 47/64 D 'expresses the need for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process'. The Palestine Liberation Organization strongly stresses this need and calls for the full engagement of the United Nations in the peace process, as well as in the provision of assistance to the Palestinian people in their efforts to build their new life and own authority and to effectively implement the Declaration of Principles.

"In paragraph 5 of the same resolution, the General Assembly reaffirmed the principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace. The Palestine Liberation Organization strongly believes that it is the duty of the international community to maintain its position of principle with regard to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the elements of the final settlement. It is therefore the position of the Palestine Liberation Organization that the Assembly should take it upon itself to reaffirm once more the principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The principle of the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine, until the question is actually resolved in all its aspects, is worth emphasizing in this regard.

"Finally, the Palestine Liberation Organization would like to underscore the request made by the General Assembly in paragraph 7 for 'the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter'. The Palestine Liberation Organization stands ready to cooperate fully with the Secretary-General to carry out those efforts in an effective and successful manner."

Observations

5. The United Nations has always supported a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in the Middle East based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and taking into account the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination.

6. In this connection, I have welcomed the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (A/48/486-S/26560, annex) signed by the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization on 13 September 1993. It is to be hoped that that agreement will lead to a comprehensive peace in the region, acceptable to all the parties concerned.

7. The United Nations stands ready to lend its full support to the peace process. In this connection, the Organization has, over the past year, participated actively in the multilateral working groups established in the framework established at the Madrid Conference in 1991. Furthermore, to help sustain the momentum of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and in an effort to support the implementation of the Declaration of Principles, the United Nations has begun to enhance its economic and social assistance to the West Bank and Gaza. Those efforts will intensify in the months ahead.